

Amendments To The Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for communication, comprising:

receiving a request from a first party, submitted via a first communication service provider to a telephony application, to place a call using the application to a second party;

responsive to a characteristic of the call placed by the first party, selecting a second communication service provider to carry the call between the application and the second party; and

connecting the second party via the second communication service provider to communicate with the first party using the application,

wherein receiving the request comprises submitting the request to the application via an application programming interface (API), which exposes a platform-independent call model to the application, and wherein connecting the second party comprises connecting the call responsive to an instruction submitted by the application to the API, and

wherein the first and second communication service providers have respective first and second telephony signaling stacks, and wherein the call model comprises an abstract call model that is independent of the telephony signaling stacks used in placing calls to and receiving calls from the application.

Claims 2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~claim 3~~ claim 1, wherein receiving the request comprises passing the request from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call model via a service provider interface of the call model, and wherein connecting the second party comprises passing signals to the second telephony signaling stack via the service provider interface, wherein the service provider interface is independent of the telephony signaling stacks.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4, wherein passing the request from the first telephony signaling stack comprises using a first plug-in program to associate the signals in the first telephony signaling stack with corresponding elements of the service provider interface, and wherein passing the signals to the second telephony signaling stack comprises using a second plug-in program to associate

the signals in the second telephony signaling stack with the corresponding elements of the service provider interface.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises selecting the second plug-in program from among a plurality of the plug-in programs that are provided for interacting with the abstract call model.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 6, wherein selecting the second plug-in program comprises passing information regarding the call to a service manager program via a service management interface of the abstract call model, wherein the service manager program processes the information to determine the characteristic, and selects the second plug-in program responsive to the characteristic from a registry of the plug-in programs.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the request comprises receiving an address of the second party to whom the call is to be placed, and wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises parsing the address to determine the second communication service provider that should be selected.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein receiving the address comprises receiving a telephone number, and wherein parsing the address comprises identifying the second communication provider based on a portion of the telephone number.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises determining a communication protocol to be used in communicating with the second party, and choosing the second communication service provider such that the second communication service provider supports the communication protocol.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 10, wherein receiving the request from the first party comprises communicating with the first party via the first communication service provider using a first communication protocol, and wherein the communication protocol used in communicating with the second party comprises a second communication protocol, different from the first protocol.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11, wherein one of the first and second communication protocols comprises a circuit-switched network protocol, while the other

of the first and second communication protocols comprises a packet-switched network protocol.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises specifying a selection rule, and applying the selection rule to the characteristic in order to determine the second communication service provider to be selected.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 13, wherein specifying the selection rule comprises specifying a temporal criterion, so that the second communication service provider is selected depending on a point in time at which the call is placed.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the telephony application comprises a teleconferencing application, and wherein connecting the second party comprises establishing a teleconference between the first and second parties.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the telephony application comprises a call center application, and wherein connecting the second party comprises establishing voice communications between a customer and a call center agent.

Claims 17-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently amended) Communication apparatus,
comprising:

a communication interface, arranged to communicate
with first and second communication service providers; and

a communication processor, arranged to send and
receive communications via the communication interface, and
further arranged to run a telephony application, such that
upon receiving a request from a first party, submitted via the
first communication service provider to the telephony
application, to place a call using the application to a second
party, the processor selects, responsive to a characteristic
of the call placed by the first party, a second communication
service provider to carry the call between the application and
the second party, and connects the second party via the second
communication service provider to communicate with the first
party using the application,

wherein the processor is arranged so that the
request is submitted to the application via an application
programming interface (API), which exposes a platform-
independent call model to the application, and so that the
call is connected to the second party responsive to an
instruction submitted by the application to the API, and

wherein the first and second communication service providers have respective first and second telephony signaling stacks, and wherein the call model comprises an abstract call model that is independent of the telephony signaling stacks used in placing calls to and receiving calls from the application.

Claims 27-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~claim 28~~ claim 26, wherein the processor is arranged so that the request is passed from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call model via a service provider interface of the call model, and so that the call is connected to the second party by passing signals to the second telephony signaling stack via the service provider interface, wherein the service provider interface is independent of the telephony signaling stacks.

30. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the processor is arranged so that the request is passed from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call model using a first plug-in program to associate the signals in the first telephony signaling stack with corresponding elements of the service provider interface, and wherein the signals are passed to the second telephony

signaling stack using a second plug-in program to associate the signals in the second telephony signaling stack with the corresponding elements of the service provider interface.

31. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 30, and comprising a memory, which is arranged to store a plurality of the plug-in programs that are provided for interacting with the abstract call model, and wherein the processor is arranged to select the second plug-in program from among the plurality of the plug-in programs in the memory.

32. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the processor is arranged to select the second plug-in program by passing information regarding the call to a service manager program via a service management interface of the abstract call model, wherein the service manager program processes the information to determine the characteristic, and selects the second plug-in program responsive to the characteristic from a registry of the plug-in programs.

33. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the request comprises an address of the second party to whom the call is to be placed, and wherein the processor is arranged to parse the address to determine the second communication service provider that should be selected.

34. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the address comprises a telephone number, and wherein the processor is arranged to identify the second communication provider based on a portion of the telephone number.

35. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the processor is arranged to determine a communication protocol to be used in communicating with the second party, and to choose the second communication service provider such that the second communication service provider supports the communication protocol.

36. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 35, wherein the processor is arranged to communicate with the first party via the first communication service provider using a first communication protocol, and wherein the communication protocol used in communicating with the second party comprises a second communication protocol, different from the first protocol.

37. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 36, wherein one of the first and second communication protocols comprises a circuit-switched network protocol, while the other of the first and second communication protocols comprises a packet-switched network protocol.

38. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the processor is arranged to select the second communication service provider by applying a selection rule to the characteristic in order to determine the second communication service provider to be selected.

39. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the selection rule comprises a temporal criterion, so that the second communication service provider is selected depending on a point in time at which the call is placed.

40. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the telephony application comprises a teleconferencing application, and wherein the processor is arranged to establish a teleconference between the first and second parties.

41. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the telephony application comprises a call center application, and wherein the processor is arranged to establish voice communications between a customer and a call center agent using the call center application.

Claims 42-55. (Canceled)

56. (Currently amended) A computer software product, comprising a computer-readable medium in which

program instructions are stored, which instructions, when read by a computer that is arranged to communicate with first and second communication service providers, cause the computer to run a telephony application, such that upon receiving a request from a first party, submitted via the first communication service provider to the telephony application, to place a call using the application to a second party, the computer selects, responsive to a characteristic of the call placed by the first party, a second communication service provider to carry the call between the application and the second party, and connects the second party via the second communication service provider to communicate with the first party using the application,

wherein the instructions cause the computer to submit the request to the application via an application programming interface (API), which exposes a platform-independent call model to the application, and so that the call is connected to the second party responsive to a response submitted by the application to the API, and

wherein the first and second communication service providers have respective first and second telephony signaling stacks, and wherein the call model comprises an abstract call model that is independent of the telephony signaling stacks

used in placing calls to and receiving calls from the application.

Claims 57-58. (Canceled)

59. (Currently amended) A product according to ~~claim 58~~ claim 56, wherein the instructions cause the computer to pass the request from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call model via a service provider interface of the call model, and so that the call is connected to the second party by passing signals to the second telephony signaling stack via the service provider interface, wherein the service provider interface is independent of the telephony signaling stacks.

60. (Original) A product according to claim 59, wherein the instructions cause the computer to pass the request from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call model, using a first plug-in program to associate the signals in the first telephony signaling stack with corresponding elements of the service provider interface, and to pass the signals to the second telephony signaling stack using a second plug-in program to associate the signals in the second telephony signaling stack with the corresponding elements of the service provider interface.

61. (Original) A product according to claim 60, wherein the instructions cause the computer to select the second plug-in program from among a plurality of the plug-in programs that are provided for interacting with the abstract call model.

62. (Original) A product according to claim 61, wherein the instructions cause the computer to select the second plug-in program by passing information regarding the call to a service manager program via a service management interface of the abstract call model, wherein the service manager program processes the information to determine the characteristic, and selects the second plug-in program responsive to the characteristic from a registry of the plug-in programs.

63. (Original) A product according to claim 56, wherein the request comprises an address of the second party to whom the call is to be placed, and wherein the instructions cause the computer to parse the address to determine the second communication service provider that should be selected.

64. (Original) A product according to claim 63, wherein the address comprises a telephone number, and wherein the instructions cause the computer to identify the second

communication provider based on a portion of the telephone number.

65. (Original) A product according to claim 56, wherein the instructions cause the computer to determine a communication protocol to be used in communicating with the second party, and to choose the second communication service provider such that the second communication service provider supports the communication protocol.

66. (Original) A product according to claim 65, wherein the instructions cause the computer to communicate with the first party via the first communication service provider using a first communication protocol, and wherein the communication protocol used in communicating with the second party comprises a second communication protocol, different from the first protocol.

67. (Original) A product according to claim 66, wherein one of the first and second communication protocols comprises a circuit-switched network protocol, while the other of the first and second communication protocols comprises a packet-switched network protocol.

68. (Original) A product according to claim 56, wherein the instructions cause the computer to select the

second communication service provider by applying a selection rule to the characteristic in order to determine the second communication service provider to be selected.

69. (Original) A product according to claim 68, wherein the selection rule comprises a temporal criterion, so that the second communication service provider is selected depending on a point in time at which the call is placed.

70. (Original) A product according to claim 56, wherein the telephony application comprises a teleconferencing application, and wherein the instructions cause the computer to establish a teleconference between the first and second parties.

71. (Original) A product according to claim 56, wherein the telephony application comprises a call center application, and wherein the instructions cause the computer to establish voice communications between a customer and a call center agent using the call center application.

Claims 72-80. (Canceled)